

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 1762

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0024

FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : OVIP, BA

SUBJECT : CODEL PERCY

1. IN VIEW LIMITED BRIEFING TIME AVAILABLE HERE AFTERNOON
JANUARY 11 FOLLOWING ADVANCE INFORMATION MIGHT BE USEFUL TO
SENATOR PERCY IN ANTICIPATION CALL ON AMIR AND (HOPEFULLY)
MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AT DINNER.

2. (A) TOPICS. 1. AMIR WILL PROBABLY STRESS BAHRAINS
FRIENDSHIP FOR US, URGE EVEN GREATER US-SAUDI (AND US-
BAHRAINI) COOPERATION, AND EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT LACK OF
MOMENTUM TOWARD MIDDLE EAST PEACE. AMIR WOULD WELCOME
SENATOR'S INDICATING: (A) U.S. INTEREST IN BAHRAIN (AND
GULF GENERALLY); (B) AWARENESS PROGRESS BAHRAIN IS MAKING,
INCLUDING EXPERIMENT WITH REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT (HE WILL
FUSS ABOUT HAVING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BYT SEEMS GRUDGINGLY
GLAD HE DID IT); (C) AMERICAN COMCERN ABOUT MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION AND SUPPORT FOR JUST AND LASTING PEACE. IN
ADDITION AMIR, WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SENATOR'S OBSERVATIONS
ON WORLD AND U.S. SITUATION, INCLUDING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER PREPARED TO DISCUSS VIRTUALLY ANYTHING
IN DEPTH, WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST IN AMERICAN ATTITUDES
TOWARD ARAB- ISRAEL PROBLEM AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
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SITUATION, ESPECIALLY ENERGY.

(B) PERSONALITIES.

1) AMIR OF BAHRAIN, SHAIKH ISA BIN SULMAN AL KHALIFA. (ADDRESSED "YOUR HIGHNESS"). AGE 41, PRIVATELY EDUCATED, RULER OF BAHRAIN SINCE 1961. CONVERSES IN ENGLISH EASILY BUT CAN GET LOST IN COMPLICATED EXCHANGES. BRIGHT, OFTEN WITTY, AND NOTABLY GRACIOUS AND PLEASANT. BERY PRO-AMERICAN; EVEN MORE PRO-BRITISH. CONCERNED THAT US MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS MAY FALTER. WORRIED ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS WORLD-WIDE. BASICALLY A MODERATE. AFTER SOME YEARS OF PRODDING BY LOYAL NATIONALIST BAHRAINIS HAS PERMITTED CONSTITUTIONAL, PARLIAMENTARY GOVT; CAUTIOUSLY PLEASED WITH RESULY BUT SENSITIVE TO ANY INDICATIONS KING FAISAL OF SHAH OF IRAN DISPLEASED WITH TOO RAPID OR PERMISSIVE POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN BAHRAIN. ESSENTIALLY MODEST MAN BUT AS AN AL KHALIFA CONSIDERS HIMSELF ARISTOCRAT OF GULF AND CULTURALLY A CUT OR SO ABOVE AMIRS OF WEALTHIER GULF STATES. LAST VISITED U.S. IN 1969.

2) MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SHAIKH MOHAMMAD BIN MUBARAK AL KHALIFA. (ADDRESSED "YOUR EXCELLENCY"). AMIR'S COUSIN. AMONG BRIGHTEST AND MOST ARTICULATE OF BAHRAINIS. GRADUATE IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, LONDON UNIVERSITY. VERY MUCH MODERN MAN IN OUTLOOK. MORE PROGRESSIVE THAN AMIR/ PRIME MINISTER BUT ESSENTIALLY LOYAL KHALIFA FAMILY MEMBER AND SKILLED TECHNOCRAT WITH NO INDEPENDENT POLITICAL BASE. BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN BUT KEENLY AWARE BAHRAIN'S NEED TO KEEP IN LINE WITH MINSTREAM ARAB POLITICAL EVOLUTION AND FOREIGN POLICY. OUTSPOKEN IN DESERE TO SEE MORE U.S. CIVILIAN IMAGE IN BAHRAIN. POLITE BUT POINTED IN HIS CRITICISM OF U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD ARAB/ISRAEL PROBLEM.

3. SENATOR SHOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT IF HE WANTS A REALLY EXPERT BRIEFING ON BAHRAIN (AND REST OF GULF FOR THAT MATTER) HE IS IN BETTER HANDS FRIDAY IN KUWAIT THAN SATURDAY HERE.

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